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# Violence at the Festival

By Tom Zito

McCREA, La.—Violence broke out at the Celebration of Life rock festival yesterday as motorcycle gang members armed with chains, knives and clubs attacked festival goers and 300 young fans tore down a row of concession stands.

No police were present when the incident occurred. A dozen stands were pushed over and smashed, and the merchandise — sandwiches, soda, milk, ice cream and fruit—was “liberated.” The youths, angry over what they consider “rip-off” prices, yelled that “food belongs to the people” and should be free.

“Pressures are definitely building,” said festival director Frank Hall, “These concession people paid a big chunk of money for the right to sell here and the kids are amazingly unprepared to either feed themselves or buy food. The weather’s hot and tempers are flaring.”

A committee of festival-goers, promoters and concession representatives met last evening to attempt to alleviate the tension.

Hard-pressed medical facilities treated over 1,500 persons for bad drug trips, sunburn and other injuries. Twenty-six persons were reported by medical authorities to have been injured by bikers since the 8-day festival officially opened on Thursday, after a 3-day delay.

Members of a New Orleans motorcycle gang, the Galloping Gooses, were initially hired to keep out gate-crashers and maintain security.

Two days before the festival began, officials called the arrangement off.

But some fans accused the Gooses and another gang, the Los Angeles-based “Wheelers”, of beating youths indiscriminately and



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*Participants in the Celebration of Life rock festival in McCreA, La., waited patiently yesterday while construction workers put the finishing touches on the stage.*

acting as self-appointed custodians of the festival grounds.

“We had one kid come in here (a makeshift infirmary) with his teeth in his hand, said Dr. William Abruzzi, the festival’s medical director. “We’ve had knife wounds, cracked skulls, everything from these people.”

Abruzzi termed conditions among the worst he had seen. (He has headed medical teams at 14 previous rock festivals, including

Powder Ridge, Conn., last summer.)

Abruzzi complained bitterly that promised medical trailers had failed to arrive. The doctor said his four-physician staff was attempting to cope with the unflux of patients in an “infirmary” consisting of four tents and a mobile home converted into a clinic.

He warned the medical situation could shortly become “critical” and that his team could run out of “basic supplies” within 24 hours.